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No. 0667/67 DATED 28 JUNE 1967

SUBJECT: South Korean Cabinet Changes


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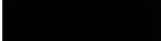
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MEMO NO **0667/67** DATE **28 June 1967** Due Dates: D/OCI Review _____
Dissem **28 June 1967**

SUBJECT: **South Korean Cabinet Changes**

REQUESTED OR ORIGINATED BY: **D/OCI for Vice President's use**

PURPOSE: **For Vice President's Use.**

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No. 0667/67

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
28 June 1967

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

South Korean Cabinet Changes

Summary

President Pak Chong-hui has retained virtually intact the cabinet whose members submitted their resignations yesterday. This action emphasizes Pak's adherence to a policy of maintaining the factional balance in his regime to ensure his control. In the face of a renewed factional struggle for dominance in the cabinet, only three posts have new ministers as Pak enters his second term as president. The Pak government evidently intends to continue its present domestic and international policies.

No Foreign Dissem

SECRET

1. In the face of renewed infighting among factions in the ruling Democratic Republican Party (DRP), President Pak has appointed only three new members to the cabinet: the ministers of foreign affairs, home affairs, and agriculture and forestry. The Foreign Ministry post had been held concurrently by Prime Minister Chong Il-kwon since late last December; the change in home minister was expected as a result of the incumbent's involvement in election irregularities; and the new agriculture and forestry minister has previously been the real operating head of that ministry. The resignations of the remaining cabinet members which were submitted on 27 June were returned by Pak to the prime minister.

2. Minister of Home Affairs Yi Ho is a prominent and respected lawyer who is qualified for his position as a result of the many legal, governmental, and diplomatic positions he has previously held. He served as a prosecutor in the Korean courts in the 1940s under the Japanese, the US military government, and the interim South Korean Government. On two occasions, in 1947 and 1962, he visited the United States to study American legal and judicial systems. Yi's experience in the Home Ministry includes a brief term as minister in the caretaker Ho Chong government. He received his university education in Japan. He speaks English sufficiently well for ordinary conversations.

3. Minister of Foreign Affairs Choe Kyu-ha was ambassador to Malaysia prior to his appointment. He has been a career official since 1951 and earned former president Rhee's favor because of his hard line toward Japan during his tenure as a vice foreign minister. He is reported to have the confidence of both Pak and DRP chairman Kim Chong-pil. Pak may have selected Choe for his background in dealing with Japan and Southeast Asia, two areas of primary interest to Seoul. Since the previous full-time foreign minister resigned last December, Prime Minister Chong had left operation of the ministry largely to the vice minister.

4. Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Kim Yong-chun is a career official. His performance as vice minister has been good and he is highly regarded by US officials who have had dealings with him. Kim is reported to have been the actual operating head of the ministry while serving under the outgoing minister. His creditable performance in a post which has considerable political influence on the large rural electorate during the recent elections probably earned his promotion. However, there are no reports indicating he has significant ties to important factions in the regime.

5. The sweeping victories of the government in the presidential and national assembly elections this spring brought in their train renewed maneuvering by various factions for greater influence in the government. The lack of an effective opposition tended to encourage infighting among factions in the DRP and the government. The cabinet changes expected after the elections became the focus of competition between the ruling party militants, led by Kim Chong-pil, who want a greater voice for the party in policy making, and a more moderate group largely centered in the administration. Kim's group endeavored to make his rivals in the government scapegoats for popular dissatisfaction over irregularities in the assembly elections. Pak's action suggests he has resisted this effort and is adhering to a policy of balancing political factions while making at least one change--in the Home Ministry--to pacify public opinion.

6. Pak's retention of most of the cabinet emphasizes his desire to continue his present policies vis-a-vis the United States and with respect to Korean participation in the Vietnam war. It also suggests that he believes the ministers he retained have demonstrated competence in carrying out his domestic policies.